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SUBJECT: Bashir Calls for Commitment to National Unity

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: Sudanese President Omer Bashir addressed the opening of the third session of the National Legislative Council (the National Assembly and Council of States in joint session) on October 30, reiterating the government's commitment to implementing peace agreements reached with groups in the south, east, and west. Bashir announced the government is focused on four primary areas of governance: enhancing comprehensive peace; strengthening good governance; promoting economic development and social justice; and improving international relations. Bashir spoke of stronger political relations with African and Arab countries, and expressed appreciation for their support against the "unfair campaign" taking place against Sudan. End summary.

Enhancing Peace

¶2. (SBU) President Bashir focused initially on matters pertaining to national peace, stating that the third session of the National Assembly would witness the second year of finalizing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the first year of implementing the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA), and the first month of implementing the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA). Pointing to the CPA as a guideline and noting the remarkable developments under the agreement that have been unique in Sudan's history, Bashir said that disagreements are inevitable and that the best way to address them is through continued dialogue. According to Bashir, the ESPA timeframe for implementation will be submitted to the National Legislature for approval and the government would support a U.S. \$600 million five-year development and rehabilitation fund for the region, with an immediate end to the state of emergency and a declaration of amnesty.

Bashir Notes DPA Implementation Intentions

¶3. (SBU) Regarding the DPA, the President addressed the formation of a higher committee to supervise implementation, initiation of the DDR plan to occur within two months in consultation with the African Union (AU) to ensure only government troops retain weapons, and establishment of various compensation and rehabilitation funds as well as promoting humanitarian assistance through establishment of basic infrastructure projects and social services. Bashir used the opportunity to thank AU forces for the work they have performed in keeping peace despite limited resources and capacity, and advocated additional regional and international financial, technical, and logistical support to make AMIS more effective and efficient. Additionally, he praised parliament for rejecting UN troops. The Government, Bashir said, is launching a plan for dialogue with regional and international interlocutors and the non-signatory factions with the objective of reaching a formula for consolidating peace and security in Darfur.

Strengthening Good Governance

¶4. (SBU) According to the President's speech, the Sudanese Interim National Constitution has "laid the foundations, principles, and basic provisions to establish good governance." As specified, the Government will develop the capacity of the legislative, constitutional, and political institutions to carry out the monitoring and accountability roles in a way that protects the rights of all citizens. Bashir noted that responsible political performance depends upon the establishment of basic freedoms of expression, and called upon all officials to cooperate positively with the media by providing true statements, accurate figures, and well explained policies.

Promoting Economic and Social Justice

¶5. (SBU) According to Bashir, there must be a basis of sustainable development and social justice. Development of the five-year comprehensive strategic plan aims at building a unified, economically self-sufficient nation; the plan consists of the following major guidelines:

- enhancement of the principles of national dialogue and peaceful political competition, rather than war and conflicts;
- sustaining the rate of economic growth;
- increasing production and productivity in both agricultural and industrial sectors and expanding the role of non-oil products;
- continuing infrastructure projects, particularly in electricity, roads, railway, and river transport to link parts of the country;
- completion of major irrigation facilities, such as the enlargement

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of the Rosaries dam, Seteit dam, and other water collection, storage, and distribution projects;

- focusing on human development to build capacity and widen employment opportunities in all sectors;
- expand scientific research and improve higher education;
- balance equally the allocation of resources between the states and localities and guarantee the fair distribution of water, health, and education services in keeping with national commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
- adoption of specific projects to combat poverty, with a special focus on rural and social development;
- concentration on income generation projects for returnees, whether internally displaced persons, refugees, or people from war-affected areas;
- focusing on quality standards to gain competitiveness locally, regionally, and internationally;
- initiating projects for the revival of cultural, intellectual, and sports areas;
- review of state structures and increasing their efficiency, combined with the devolution and redistribution of powers and jurisdiction between different levels of governance; and
- developing defense and security institution capacities to defend peace, the homeland, and the nation's sovereignty.

Foreign Relations

¶6. (SBU) Bashir announced that Sudan's foreign policy would promote stronger relations with friendly countries and enhance relations

with African and Arab-Islamic nations. Sudan will work with friends and allies to establish international relations marked by mutual respect. Bashir concluded by stating that as long as the government sticks to its principles, it would have the support of both the Sudanese people and of other nations.

POWERS